Rugby’s Win at Regionals

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After a stellar 2011 season with an undefeated record, the Charlotte Catholic rugby team traveled to Orlando, Florida to compete against the region’s best at Southeast US High School Rugby Regional Tournament on April 30th, 2011.

On the first day, the talented rugby boys faced Archbishop Shaw High School of New Orleans, the second seed from Louisiana. Catholic came out strong in the first half, led by senior captains Nick Funck and Jake Finger. Both teams played hard throughout the entire game, but the Cougars won their first game of the tournament with a final score of 36-0.

Later that day, the Rugby Cougars were challenged by the number one seed in South Carolina, Chapin High School. The first half was a battle between the evenly matched teams, with both sides fighting for every point. However, the Cougars fought back and ended the game with 29-0, advancing to the championship game.

With two shutouts, the team had high hopes and expectations going to the championship round, where they would play their toughest competition yet: Jupiter High School, the top-ranked team from Florida. The beginning of the game fell in the Cougars’ favor, but Jupiter kept up with great defense until the end. Despite Jupiter’s great effort, the Cougars proved too much for the Warriors, taking home the Southeast Regional title with a final score of 45-12.

“Everyone played well the entire tournament, and every player got the opportunity to get out on the field,” said Junior Matt Cincotta. Cincotta had his own shining moment during the tournament. He prevented Archbishop Shaw from scoring after chasing the ball down the field for thirty yards.

On May 20th and 21st, the rugby team will compete in the High School Rugby National Championships in Salt Lake City, Utah representing the Southeast. The boys hope to come home with the championship title to round out their perfect 12-0 season.

“You can’t just go in to a game and expect to win. You have to be on your A game and really work for that victory,” said Cincotta. The team will go into the tournament as the fourth seed, and their first game will be against the fifth seed, Fallbrook.

“It’s an honor to be able to play on such a big stage inside a major league soccer stadium on the other side of the country,” junior Murphy Swancey said. This will be the third time the team will make an appearance at nationals, finishing fourth last year and eighth the year before.

“We’re hoping for a three peat, and a first place title,” junior Jackson Krone said. “We’re looking forward to playing Xavier, the team that beat us last year, in the semis. It would be nice to give them a taste of their own medicine,” Krone said.

Unfortunately, after a hard fought game leading to a tie against Xavier, penalty kicks decided the boys’ fate at Nationals. They finished their season with a 4th place finish out of 800 teams in all of the United States.